

Washington, DC -- At a public meeting last night at the New Hartford High School, U.S. Representative Michael A. Arcuri (D-Utica) vowed to continue the fight against the Department of Energy's (DOE) draft proposal to create a Mid-Atlantic Area National Corridor that could allow New York Regional Interconnection (NYRI) to thwart state authority and use federal eminent domain to acquire private property. Arcuri collected hundreds of public comment forms he will submit to the DOE in Washington, D.C.

"New Yorkers gathered to address their government – to speak up and be heard regarding an issue that could profoundly affect their lives and property," said Arcuri, who hosted the public meeting in New Hartford. "The message from those in attendance regarding the NYRI proposal was overwhelming clear – not now and not ever. In Washington, I'm fighting every day to stop the DOE's draft corridors, to prevent NYRI from running roughshod over local property owners, creating health concerns and raising local energy costs. You can be sure the voices of residents most affected by NYRI's poorly-planned and ill-conceived power line proposal will be heard."

"This is just the beginning of a long fight, but I promise you that in Washington I am pursuing every avenue to protect our homes, health, and wallets here in Upstate New York. The DOE didn't want to hear from the families most affected by these corridors – but we're going to be sure they do. I have also requested additional Congressional hearings on this federal policy that takes away local property rights in all states - but leaves a troubling exemption for a large part of Texas."

Last week, Arcuri sent a formal letter to U.S. Energy Secretary Samuel Bodman, outlining his strong opposition to the DOE's decision to host public meetings outside of New York's 24th district and inviting the DOE to attend Arcuri's meetings in New Hartford and Norwich.

Arcuri and fellow Representatives Maurice Hinchey (D- Hurley), and John Hall (D-Dover Plains) also sent a letter to Kevin Kolar, Director of the Office of Electricity Delivery and Energy Reliability, requesting local public meetings in Upstate New York. The DOE hosted a meeting on this issue in Manhattan, and has announced it will hold a public meeting in Rochester, NY in June; however, the DOE has yet to make any further details available to the public.

Arcuri, Hall, Hinchey and six other Representatives whose districts are affected by the DOE's

draft corridors have asked the House Appropriations Subcommittee on Energy and Water Development to insert language into the spending bill that would prohibit the DOE from using any money in its budget to implement these corridors that would allow federal agencies to consider projects such as NYRI's.

In February, Arcuri, Hall, and Hinchey introduced two pieces of legislation which would effectively block NYRI from being able to use federal eminent domain law to condemn private property along the proposed route.

Arcuri also successfully amended the Rail & Public Transportation Security Act to require the Departments of Homeland Security and Transportation to evaluate the safety and security of placing high voltage direct current electric transmission power lines along active railroad rights-of-way.

Section 1221 of the Energy Policy Act of 2005, created new federal authority to site electric transmission lines throughout the country. Under the Act, the Department of Energy may designate areas of the country as "National Interest Electric Transmission Corridors." Within these corridors, state authority over transmission lines may be preempted and new federal eminent domain authority could be used to obtain land for approved electric utility transmission projects, such as NYRI's power line proposal.

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